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on Thursday, 30 June 1994, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mr. BOTEZ (Vice-President)	(Romania)

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/34, Parts I, II and III, E/1994/35, E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/84, E/1994/93)

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that it was appropriate for the segment on operational activities to follow the discussion of the agenda for development, since both topics dealt with the role of the United Nations in development, operational activities being the most visible manifestation of its role in that area.

The process of revitalization, restructuring and reform of the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields was well under way on three main tracks. The first was the restructuring, reform and revitalization of intergovernmental structures for policy dialogue on coordination and governance, which had begun in response to General Assembly resolution 48/162. Second was the reform of the management and delivery system for operational activities for development called for in resolution 47/199. The third part of the process, a review of the financial arrangements for such activities, as required by resolution 48/162, was still in progress. Although the current discussion would focus on the second strand of reform, it should be recognized that achievements in that area would remain incomplete if the reform process did not continue in the other two areas.

The key word in the discussion of operational activities was coordination, and a better understanding of the many expectations of coordination was needed. First, coordination involved a better exchange of information among members of the system, which would lead in turn to a sharing of resources between the different parts of the system. That sharing should

then progress to joint action on specific problems. Much of the work on improving the exchange of information took place within the central coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system, while the work of sharing of resources and joint action took place at the country level. Efforts were being made to strengthen it through the preparation of country strategy notes and the programme approach, both of which were essential to programme coordination. Some elements of programme coordination existed at the global and regional level, but true coordination in the form of joint action required a shared framework, such as Agenda 21. Coordination took place at the country level through country strategy notes, which were prepared on a voluntary basis by the Governments of recipient countries.

It was not enough to coordinate only within the United Nations system; coordination with Governments was vital. The capacity to execute projects within national Governments was increasing, and, in his view, the best technical assistance would make itself redundant. Coordination with Governments required as much emphasis as coordination within the system itself, and the country strategy note was the basic instrument of that improved coordination. In the future, greater emphasis should be placed on coordination of mainline development work with humanitarian activities.

The high-level segment on operational activities represented an innovation which had resulted from resolution 48/162. He urged the Council to concentrate its discussions on the overall sense of direction for the strengthening of coordination.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that, at the annual session of the UNDP Executive Board recently held in Geneva, the Board had endorsed the concept of sustainable human development and its four key dimensions of poverty elimination, employment generation, empowerment of women and the regeneration of the environment as an appropriate framework within which to assist programme countries in their endeavour to realize sustainable human development in line with their national development priorities. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly must

forcefully address the issue of the financing of operational activities in order to conclude the governance and financing aspects of the restructuring agreement reached earlier.

In translating sustainable human development into reality, UNDP had learned that development must be based on the participation and commitment of the beneficiaries if national capacity was to be built to the point that its impact would be sustained. Effective cooperation must be based on the ownership of the development process by the nationals. In most cases, the external partner was providing only one contribution to a larger development effort, and no external force could be a substitute for national management if sustained results were desired. The programme approach and national execution had been adopted as the basis for support to programme countries. While the role of the formal sector and of Governments was crucial, effective development must be inclusive, bringing in civil society both as beneficiaries and contributors to the process.

Transparency and accountability were long-standing concerns of those financing development cooperation. The new programme support document placed considerable emphasis on the clear definition of goals, targets, benchmarks and results, which must be measurable, and quantifiable whenever possible. Another major concern had been with the coordination of external resources and their integration with local resources at the country level. The primary responsibility lay with Governments, and UNDP continued to help Governments in some 30 countries to bring together development partners in support of national priority programmes through coordination mechanisms such as the round table. In other countries, UNDP contributed to the preparation of technical cooperation aspects of consultative group meetings organized by the World Bank. That reflected a growing recognition that a policy framework and an enabling environment at the country level were crucial for the effective transfer and use of external resources.

UNDP had a pivotal role to play in the coordination of operational activities at the country level. The General Assembly had recently reaffirmed

that such coordination should be entrusted to the resident coordinator, that the UNDP resident representative should normally be the resident coordinator, and that the resident coordinator should normally coordinate humanitarian assistance. A number of measures had been initiated to strengthen the resident coordinator network. In March 1994, the resident coordinator concept had been fully implemented, and a roster of UNDP staff members and consultants experienced in humanitarian and emergency operations had been established. A comprehensive approach to training had been developed, together with training initiatives for first-time resident representatives and coordinators. The quality of country office staff and the matching of country requirements with the strengths and qualifications of resident coordinators had been upgraded.

In the area of substantive programming, UNDP was working with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) on the matter of common premises and was conducting a further review of ways better to utilize programme and administrative resources at the country level in a coordinated and complementary manner. It was working on the revitalization of the high-level inter-agency task force between the World Bank and UNDP with a view to identifying new areas of collaboration, and was setting up substantive task forces with a number of agencies in order to rebuild partnerships and identify new initiatives.

The adoption of the word "system" to describe the agencies and organizations under the United Nations umbrella had not in itself established a system. In a diffuse and multi-centred system such as the United Nations, harmonization, convergence and coordination could be brought about only through a time-consuming process of consultation and consensus. Although the pace had been slow at times, the UNDP Secretariat had persevered and had achieved significant changes. The debate on the reform and restructuring of the United Nations system for operational activities could not be divorced from the issue of the resource base, however. Changes had been introduced in the governance of some of the major funds and the secretariat, but a renewed commitment by member countries was also needed, first to ensure that policy

coordination took place internally as well as in the international arena, and secondly to ensure that the enhanced financial resources due to accompany changes in governance and practice were forthcoming.

Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that Member States had already achieved a consensus on many of the priorities at the core of sustainable human development. The commitments made as a result of Agenda 21 and the World Summit for Children were two clear examples, in addition to goals such as basic education for all and health for all by the year 2000. However, in other areas, such as income generation for the poor, clear strategies and processes were still needed. The absence of a strategy for income generation undermined the very impressive progress that was being made in addressing the needs of children, for instance. The Economic and Social Council could play a role in identifying the gaps in the sustainable development "package" and ensuring that mechanisms were established to develop those strategies. Likewise, even the most well-defined strategy for addressing human need and poverty would not succeed unless it was closely linked to a macro-economic and external financial strategy. The Council had a responsibility under the Charter to provide links with the Bretton Woods institutions and to ensure a comprehensive approach to those issues.

In addition to defining strategies, the Council shared the responsibility for providing a framework for common action by the United Nations system. The Economic and Social Council had been instrumental in supporting efforts to link macro-economic and human concerns and had been the site of a seminal discussion related to "adjustment with a human face". Naturally, it would be fruitless to discuss development strategies without addressing the question of resources. As a vital part of the effort to secure adequate resources, the Council should ensure that available resources were devoted to high-priority activities. The so-called 20:20 initiative was an essential part of that renewed effort and attempted to ensure that at least 20 per cent of overseas development assistance and at least 20 per cent of

national budgets were devoted to meeting priority activities directly related to human need.

Another example of the role of the high-level operational activity segment related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, in which the General Assembly encouraged the United Nations organizations to collaborate at the strategic level, in support of government strategies. The country strategy note was one of the ways in which the United Nations system was promoting strategic collaboration. General Assembly resolution 47/199 also provided for a shift from the project to the programme approach, which established key goals representing the true priorities of the national Government and then structured assistance around the achievement of those goals. That approach required readiness to provide assistance in whatever form would best serve the goals. The division between technical assistance, capital assistance, cash or supplies had to be eliminated. In resolution 47/199 the Assembly also urged that the function of the resident coordinator system should be strengthened. Significant progress had been achieved in that regard, including the expansion of the pool of those eligible to be resident representatives and resident coordinators.

In conclusion, while the realization of sustainable human development and the establishment of the strategies of the United Nations system and of mechanisms to implement those strategies represented major challenges for the Organization, he stressed that there had been many positive achievements. For instance, UNICEF had recently conducted a country-by-country in-house review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, which had concluded that a majority of the countries were on their way to achieving a majority of the goals, thereby determining whether millions of children lived or died in the coming years.

Mrs. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme) said that, in the past five years, the resources of the World Food Programme (WFP) had doubled and that there had been a dramatic shift from development to emergency resources. Currently, two thirds of the resources were devoted to emergency

food relief and one third went toward development. In 1993, the World Food Programme had provided food to 47 million people throughout the world, most of whom were women and children. In coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme had provided food to all the major refugee locations around the world and had taken steps to improve its emergency response. It had also endeavoured to increase its collaborative partnership with non-governmental organizations. The World Food Programme valued the strong working relationship it maintained with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the area of emergency relief.

At the request of its governing body, the WFP had embarked on a major review of its policies, objectives and strategies, and would report to the Economic and Social Council in 1994, offering specific suggestions regarding changes in its rules and regulations. The World Food Programme would concentrate on using its resources for three interrelated purposes: to save lives in emergency situations, to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people by providing them with food at critical times in their lives when food was vital for their survival and to help them grow and prosper and, lastly, to help build assets and promote self-reliance through labour-intensive work programmes that generated employment and income and constructed the infrastructure necessary for sustainable development. An example of such a programme was the "food for work" programme. Moreover, priority would also be given to supporting disaster mitigation, preparedness and rehabilitation activities as part of development programmes. Emphasis would be placed on directing food to women, who were the people most likely to ensure that the entire family would receive that food. With regard to resource policies, it had been decided that a single pool should be established for core activities, with a global reserve for larger unpredictable emergencies, and that greater flexibility in resource management should be introduced.

With regard to General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 47/199, the World Food Programme was proposing organizational changes that would be considered by an open-ended working group of its governing body and ultimately submitted

for review to the Economic and Social Council, the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the General Assembly and, lastly, the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Those changes included modifications in WFP regulations that would enable it to implement the programme approach.

The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), which was currently chaired by WFP, had convened its high-level meeting in Bangladesh. It was the first time that that body had met in a developing country. The meeting reflected the high priority given by all JCGP partners to the coordination of operational activities in the field. Moreover, the Joint Consultative Group on Policy had invited UNHCR and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to participate as observers at JCGP meetings, with a view to strengthening the coordination of action between those organizations. The World Food Programme and its JCGP partners were committed to working together to reach hungry and poor people throughout the world.

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that General Assembly resolution 48/162 had not provided practical details for the format of the current session of the Council, leaving considerable leeway for interpretation regarding its implementation. Noting that it would have been preferable for the debate on operational activities to be directly linked to the general policy theme of the session, namely an agenda for development, he hoped that that link would be established in the future so that the main theme of the session would receive in-depth and exhaustive treatment.

It was a matter of great concern that there was a crucial lack of resources for operational activities and an ever-growing trend on the part of some funds and programmes to disregard their operational duties in favour of new activities that did not correspond to their mandate or their capacity. That practice was detrimental, as it did not fill the donor gap but potentially gave rise to disappointment and resignation on the part of the recipient countries. Development was generated in the field, through contact with daily life and by drawing on the local assets of each community; that fundamental fact had to be taken into account if the operational activities of

the United Nations system were to achieve their potential. A top priority was the strengthening of the capacity of the various entities of that system, individually and collectively, to implement effective programmes and projects in the field that were adapted to the needs and priorities of the recipient countries. In that regard, the Group of 77 attached particular importance to the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, particularly with regard to the programme approach, national execution, decentralization, inter-agency coordination and harmonization of the programming cycles of the different institutions.

The time had come also to evaluate the results of the new system for providing programme support and to ensure that it did not lead to a downgrading of the role of the specialized agencies and regional commissions in the attainment of the objectives of operational activities. The financing of operational activities was a topic that should be discussed in consultations, as provided in paragraph 34 of General Assembly resolution 48/162. The Group of 77 continued to hold the view that the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations should result in a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as stated in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 48/162. The Group of 77 had noted with regret a growing tendency on the part of certain donor countries to introduce new conditions that linked the granting of assistance to purely political considerations. Such practices called into question the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system which should be their universal, voluntary and grant nature, neutrality and multilateralism.

While the developing countries recognized the importance of a system of evaluation and auditing for operational activities, those systems should not become a form of interference in the implementation of the various programmes

in the recipient countries, whose national goals and priorities had to remain the basis for all programming.

Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union had hoped for a more focused discussion during the initial high-level segment on the issues of coordination, the functioning of the funds and programmes and aid to social sectors. He regretted that informal consultations convened for that purpose had produced no results. A generally accepted definition of what constituted human priority expenditure would be needed before further work could be undertaken on the 20:20 concept. It was already possible, on the other hand, to see a real improvement in the effectiveness of Executive Boards, notably that of UNDP/UNFPA, an improvement that should be extended to other governing bodies. He would like to address three main topics: coordination, improving the focus of the United Nations system and the delivery of aid by the United Nations system.

As a result of General Assembly resolution 47/199, the pool from which UNDP recruited resident coordinators had been widened, enabling UNDP to hire the most qualified applicants for the job. The Council should send a clear message to the heads of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies that the United Nations must develop a new spirit of partnership. Each organization must commit itself to closer cooperation at the headquarters level. In the field, the resident coordinators and their staff must be well trained and fully supported by the system.

The United Nations organizations could achieve better focus without sacrificing their responsiveness or the needs of individual developing countries. Following a review by the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the governing bodies of the agencies could identify areas where there was overlapping or where a particular agency had no obvious role to play. The country strategy note was a promising tool for identifying the needs of recipient countries.

With regard to the delivery of aid by the United Nations system, greater priority should be given to the evaluation of results, so that it could be

more accurately determined whether programmes were providing value for money. Clearer lines of authority in the execution and implementation of programmes should be established. The European Union would also like to see greater transparency in the cost structure, particularly with regard to administrative costs. Harmonizing United Nations funding cycles with national budget cycles, plans and strategies remained a problem, but the idea was worth pursuing.

The European Union hoped that the high-level segment could accomplish much of the work of preparing next year's triennial policy review and looked forward to participating constructively in the consultations already under way.

Miss DEGN (Denmark) said that the agreement of December 1993 on an initial package of reforms of United Nations activities in the economic and social fields gave cause for optimism. It was essential that the United Nations should strengthen its operational muscle. She welcomed the replacement of the former governing bodies of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF with smaller Executive Boards.

One of the basic issues facing the Council was financing. Resources for operational activities must be found on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. The current situation, in which a small group of countries carried the larger share of the financial burden, was untenable in the long run for both donor and recipients. The funding system in the Nordic reform proposals, combining assessed contributions, multi-year negotiated pledges and voluntary contributions, would provide United Nations development agencies with a more stable economic basis and contribute to a more even distribution of the burden.

After considering the modalities of financing, the Council needed to decide what to finance. Urgent action was required to mobilize resources for basic social services. Experience had shown that developing countries achieved higher and more sustainable levels of development when more was spent on primary needs. Yet development aid was largely spent in other sectors with no direct bearing on the alleviation of poverty. Structural adjustment often

resulted in severe cuts in the public sector, particularly in health and education services. Her country was already allocating a large part of its official development aid to areas such as health, nutrition and population.

She found the 20:20 concept a useful basis for discussion. She endorsed the pairing of economic growth with basic social services and the principle of a shared commitment by recipient and donor countries. An initial discussion of the 20:20 concept today could give impetus to further discussions of the concept at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.

Mr. McCALL (United States of America) said that, through a number of recent conferences and summits and the Secretary-General's agenda for development, a consensus was gradually emerging on the nature of the problems facing the global community in the post-cold-war era; unfortunately, the capacity of international institutions to implement the necessary solutions had not kept pace. The United Nations system was facing greater challenges than ever before, but after decades of neglect by Member States the system was fragmented and compartmentalized. There were more than 30 different entities dealing with population issues. As another example, while UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP had made heroic efforts in crisis spots around the world, there was no single United Nations organization with a specific mandate to coordinate the reintegration of refugees into their societies. The system was suffering from the rigidities of bureaucratic fiefdoms built up over the years. It was imperative that each institution should be evaluated on the basis of the comparative advantage it brought to an integrated approach to a relief/development continuum strategy, so that marginal programmes and useless expenditures could be eliminated.

In addition to institutional collaboration and complementarity, it was essential that the macro-economic strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions and the humanitarian outlook of the United Nations agencies should be harmonized. Among other things, the issues of natural and man-made disasters and the unique characteristics of each country would have to be factored into macro-economic strategies.

Recent reform efforts, such as country strategy notes and an enhanced role for resident coordinators, were important steps toward improving field-level coordination, but more fundamental reforms were required. The recommendations made by Catherine Gwin of the Overseas Development Council, and particularly the idea of re-inventing UNDP's coordinating role in the field, were worth pursuing.

Programmes should empower people economically, socially and politically to solve their own problems by giving them ownership and control over projects and resources. "Top-down" development strategies should be jettisoned in favour of community-based participatory approaches. Again, the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions would have to be brought into harmony with that approach.

Sustainable human development was an essential organizing principle for United Nations operational activities. It was the task of the Council to ensure that the system was prepared to act on the recommendations that would undoubtedly result from the upcoming series of global conferences. It could do so by putting people first, rather than protecting bureaucratic fiefdoms. A programme of sustainable development could only grow out of the experiences of ordinary people and their nations of what problems should be addressed and how they should be solved. It should involve, respond, and be accountable, to the people who must live with the results.

Mr. KÄÄRIÄ (Observer for Finland) said that his delegation was pleased with the steps so far taken to implement the reforms mentioned in General Assembly resolution 48/162. There were already tangible improvements at the executive-board level, especially in the case of the UNDP Executive Board. His delegation was anxious, however, to see speedier implementation of the reforms and was particularly concerned about the Executive Board of WFP. The reform package should not be opened for re-negotiation in the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes. One critical area of reform still to be addressed was the financing mechanism. His delegation looked forward to participating in the forthcoming consultations on the issue.

The results of the present year's operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council should be carefully analysed to provide guidance for the preparation of the meeting next year. There would seem to be a need to agree in the future on one or two topics on which the high-level meetings should focus.

He would like to suggest some guidelines for the annual reports of the programmes and funds. In a very condensed way, they should highlight to what extent the agency had carried out policies formulated by the General Assembly, or the action programmes of global conferences, or followed policy guidance given by the Council. Annual reports should point out critical areas or difficulties experienced and should outline the organization's main policy orientation and any major new initiatives. In addition, the Council should announce a topic on which the agencies were to report. The topics for the coming year might be the issue of operationalizing the concept of human development with an emphasis on women.

Another suggested topic, the 20:20 concept, would be an issue at the World Summit for Social Development and the Cairo Summit to be held later in the year. While his country attached great importance to allocating resources to social sectors, it felt that there must be a thorough and critical discussion of what the 20:20 concept might imply before it was adopted internationally. The first question was one of policies versus resources. Without the right policy mix, there was a danger that some resources might not be used in the most effective way and investments might not have the expected results. Some investments in social areas were not sustainable because the Government concerned did not have the means to maintain the system. Foreign aid must always be in support of national efforts. Another issue to be considered was which sectors were most in need of foreign aid, that is, of foreign currency or foreign expertise, and which sectors could be adequately addressed with local resources. Those were only a few of the questions that required full discussion in relation to the 20:20 concept. He had not touched upon the delivery side of the system, because his delegation felt that it

could be more meaningfully discussed by experts at the working level of the segments.

Mr. GORITA (Romania) said that the task of the specialized agencies was becoming increasingly complex, since they were expected to be knowledgeable about not only their own fields but also the specific conditions of each country. Romania was one of a group of States undergoing a transition from a centralized economy to a market-oriented one. Thanks to the positive and constructive cooperation of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, operational activities for development had been tailed to the specific needs of Romania's economy and society. Programmes had been implemented to develop small and medium-sized private enterprises, to support the privatization process and to promote much needed market institutions. With the cooperation of UNFPA and UNICEF, programmes in mother and child health care, family counselling, family planning and national census-taking had been established. The success of a significant number of such specifically oriented programmes could serve as an example for similar activities in other countries in transition.

Direct and indirect losses to Romania as a result of sanctions imposed against Iraq and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were estimated at approximately $US 10 billion. It was time for operational activities for development to address the whole issue of sanctions and their impact on third States. Romania wished to express its gratitude to those countries that had voted in favour of providing assistance to it through UNDP.

His Government was concerned about the cost-sharing arrangement for the UNDP office in Bucharest. The per capita gross national product of Romania had been less than $US 1,400 in 1991 and well below $US 1,000 in 1993. Both figures were below the limit established for a cost-sharing arrangement of 50 per cent. His delegation therefore hoped that UNDP would take appropriate action in that regard.

In conclusion, he wished to emphasize that the decisions taken by agency administrators and governing bodies to decentralize their activities had had

an extremely positive effect on cooperation between Romania and UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Mr. MATHISEN (Norway) expressed the hope that the operational activities segment would function like the international development council envisaged in the Nordic United Nations project. More focused discussion would be a major step in that direction. The substantive content of the operational activities segment still needed to be defined. Substantive themes for the operational activities segment should be identified during the Council's organizational meeting at the beginning of each year. The themes should be relevant to United Nations development organizations, and could include coordination, financing, reform, or issues discussed in the World Development Report 1994 or the Human Development Report - poverty alleviation, the promotion of social sector development and women in development. Documentation which analysed problems and opportunities rather than merely describing them would facilitate the discussions.

His delegation welcomed the improved coordination and targeting of United Nations development cooperation in each country. The new United Nations country strategy notes were vital in that connection. The organizations of the United Nations should ensure that their individual country programmes adhered to that common framework. It was a matter of concern that, according to some evaluation reports, the implementation capacity of programme countries was not developing rapidly enough.

Every effort must be made to implement the recommendations of the triennial policy review at all levels of the United Nations development system. The role of resident coordinators must be better defined. Resident coordinators must have greater authority to ensure country-level coordination and should receive substantive support from UNDP. To that end, the Programme's capacity for analysis and policy development within the United Nations system must be enhanced. Resources for country-level coordination must be increased. Such coordination would not necessarily undermine the identity of each individual organization. However, the division of labour

among the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must be reviewed further.

The triennial policy review of 1995 should analyse opportunities for or obstacles to a more effective and coordinated United Nations system at the country level. It should also consider possibilities for earmarking more resources for coordination through mechanisms that would share and recover costs for services rendered to the entire United Nations system.

Field activities of the United Nations development system were fragmented, overlapping and not sufficiently focused on key, strategic areas. If United Nations development cooperation did not translate into more concrete results at the country level, it might not be able to count on the same high level of contributions from Norway or, perhaps, from other donor countries either.

Mrs. CHINERY-HESSE (Deputy Director-General, International Labour Office) stressed that coordination must allow agencies sufficient flexibility to fulfil their core mandates. The International Labour Organization (ILO), a tripartite organization, would support coordination provided it was guaranteed continued access to workers and employers organizations and to Governments. The ILO welcomed the comments by the Administrator of UNDP concerning the need to work within development frameworks established by countries themselves. It recognized that other parties in civil societies as well as Governments could contribute to the development process. Innovative participatory approaches would have to be developed in order to ensure their participation. The machinery for consultation with Governments at the country level must also be perfected. It was important to define at whose behest activities were being carried out.

The ILO had established multidisciplinary themes for the management of its operational programmes and maintained an active partnership policy. It sought to ensure greater complementarity between research and operational activities. An effort was being made to respond more directly to the needs and priorities of its constituents while focusing on its core mandate. Its

goal was to "do fewer things better". At the country level, it was implementing together with its constituents - Governments, employers and workers - a system of country-objective reviews in order to identify needs and set priorities. The country reviews provided a framework for a programme of activities to be implemented jointly by the ILO and the country concerned.

In order to respond quickly and flexibly to emerging needs, the ILO had established multdisciplinary teams in various subregions . The teams were responsible for programme formulation, policy advice and technical support for programmes and projects. As full partners with representatives of the United Nations system, they were expected to lend their support to inter-agency efforts at the country level and to resident coordinators.

Some problems had been encountered in implementing the new approach. The demand for Technical Support Services at the Programme Level (TSS-1) far exceeded available resources and TSS-1 had become a catalyst for work under regular budget and country-oriented programmes. The original objectives of the new arrangement for Technical Support Services at the Project Level (TSS-2) had, to a large extent, not been achieved. The role of nearly all agencies in UNDP-financed projects from 1993 to 1994 had been reduced much more drastically than expected and only a very small quantity of TSS-2 resources had been approved to ensure technical support for nationally executed projects. The reasons for that would probably be analysed during an evaluation, the results of which were to be presented to the UNDP Executive Board session in October. In the circumstances, she feared that some countries might be deprived of the full potential and technical support of the agencies. The agencies were expected to become "centres of excellence" and to provide high-quality policy advice. However, in order to become centres of excellence, they needed continuous feedback from operational activities. In order to provide policy advice, they must be familiar with the problems of project design and implementation.

She was pleased to note that, at the recent annual session of its Executive Board, UNDP had adopted a new strategic orientation which addressed

some of those concerns. The ILO fully supported the goal of sustainable human development, for the principle of social justice was enshrined in its Constitution.

Although there was no single institution in the United Nations system responsible for the reintegration of persons displaced by conflict, she was pleased to report that the ILO, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and other agencies were working together in that area. That was a good example of successful coordination at Headquarters and in the field.

Mr. SAMUELSSON (Observer for Sweden) said that, while he agreed that the United Nations development system needed to be reformed, he also believed that the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 48/162 represented a major achievement. His delegation was pleased to observe the Executive Boards, established under resolution 48/162 for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, developing their working methods during the transitional year. In the context of its own transition, the Economic and Social Council should organize the format of its high-level segment so as to facilitate decision-making on key issues. Those decisions would then guide the Executive Boards of the programmes, agencies and funds in their work.

The new financing system, the next step in the reform process, must provide for both a review of the level of resources available for programmes and the means of putting resources on a stable, predictable and assured basis.

Referring to General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review, he said that an integrated approach at the country level must be strengthened through country strategy notes and the resident coordinator functions. Only one country strategy note had been completed thus far, but he hoped that that number would increase and that operational activities would become less fragmented. Noting the vital role of the resident coordinators, he stressed that their appointment was an extremely crucial management decision.

His delegation had already emphasized the importance of a more clearly defined role for the United Nations in the economic and social fields and of

the identification of priorities. Top priority should be accorded to focusing United Nations development activities on the poorer developing countries. That was a reflection of Sweden's own development policy, which stressed poverty eradication. Through the network of country offices, mainly UNDP offices, the United Nations could play a supportive and coordinating role in other countries as well. Such activities should be financed primarily through cost-sharing arrangements and only to a limited extent through the regular budgets of the programmes and funds.

There was no easy formula for achieving those goals, but experience had demonstrated the importance of activities aimed at achieving broad-based sustainable economic growth. Such activities should promote a market economy and prescribe a clear role for the State within the framework of democracy and respect for human rights. Other important measures include political and economic reform programmes, debt relief, investment in infrastructure and technical assistance, particularly in the field of capacity-building. At the same time, vulnerable groups must be protected, if necessary, through additional targeted activities in the social sectors. A programme approach was generally more constructive than the traditional project approach. The development of human and financial resources for improving social infrastructure depended on active community participation and a health economy. The exact mix of activities must be determined on a case-by-case basis by the United Nations and the countries concerned in international forums such as the consultative groups led by the World Bank.

The United Nations system should be extremely careful in setting overall quantitative goals such as the 20:20 compact presented in the Human Development Report 1994. Such concepts tended to simplify very difficult and crucial questions, diverting attention from the substantive issues. The concept must be clarified and its definition made more consistent. To that end, it should be discussed in greater detail. His delegation was prepared to participate in those discussions during the session of the Council and in the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) expressed his delegation's full support for the statement made by the representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union. His delegation attached importance to the reform of the operational activities segment which, in the past, had produced few practical results.

Donors and recipients alike had complained that the role of individual agencies in the United Nations system was lacking in clarity. There had also been complaints about unnecessary duplication of efforts and inadequate inter-governmental policy guidance. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/162 on further measures for restructuring and revitalization provided an opportunity to change that situation. The reform process should emphasize policy guidance, priority-setting, improved coordination at the field level and a more integrated approach to development.

His delegation welcomed the improvements in coordination both at Headquarters and in the field since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199. In particular, the widening of the pool from which UNDP recruited resident coordinators was a major step forward. The Economic and Social Council must now send a clear message to the heads of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies: the United Nations system must develop a new spirit of partnership. That was the message delivered by the Secretary-General in an agenda for development. At Headquarters, such a partnership would require the genuine commitment of each organization to working more closely with the other organizations in the system. Organizations must provide their field staff with the tools for effective cooperation by, inter alia, ensuring that joint programmes were not delayed because some organizations had decentralized extensive approval authority to the field while others had yet to streamline headquarters approval procedures. In the field, the system must give full support to resident coordinators and provide better training for both resident coordinators and other United Nations staff members. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to strengthening the resident coordinator system.

The organizations of the United Nations development system could highlight their comparative advantages without compromising their responsiveness to the needs of individual recipient countries. For example, it would be useful to identify areas in which there was unnecessary duplication or involvement in areas where agencies had no role to play. At the country level, the country strategy note was an excellent tool for responding collectively to the needs of recipient Governments. However, where United Nations involvement was not appropriate, other aid agencies, the private sector or non-governmental organizations should be invited to carry out certain tasks.

Lastly, greater priority should be accorded to evaluation activities in order to determine whether programmes were achieving their objectives. The means of implementation must also be reviewed. While progress had been achieved in both capacity-building and national execution, the United Nations system was not necessarily doing enough to enable recipient countries to take responsibility for their own development, in particular for the poorest groups.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) said that UNDP should focus on its role as coordinator between programme countries and bilateral or multilateral donor institutions. Programmes for each country should be tailored to the country's individual needs and priorities. Indicative planning figures (IPFs), whose comprehensiveness and accuracy had been demonstrated, should not be replaced by new, less effective indicators which might result in the politicization of programmes. His delegation welcomed the proposals put forward by the Administrator of UNDP concerning priorities for the sixth programming cycle. It also welcomed the Programme's goals of focusing on poverty eradication, environmental protection, the creation of new employment opportunities, the advancement of women and vulnerable groups, the promotion of national capacity in the field of aid coordination, the reform of the private and public sectors and the increasing importance of human development programmes. The five-year programming cycle should be maintained in order to ensure continuity.

His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on funding operational activities for development within the United Nations system (A/48/940) and hoped that the consultations held on the report would be open-minded. A decline in contributions had already lowered IPFs by 30 per cent during the fifth programming cycle. Increased emphasis on cost-sharing and a further decline in contributions might well lead to the demise of many programmes benefiting developing countries. In the final analysis, the improvement of operational activities depended on putting financial resources on a stable and predictable basis.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.